



# FEMA

## *Erosion Control Project Protects Historic West Jonesport Cemetery*

**Jonesport, ME** – The coastal Town of Jonesport, Maine, offers a spectacular water view and maritime activities such as fishing and pleasure boating. The scene is picturesque on a clear summer day, but the shoreline is vulnerable to severe erosion during coastal storms. Waves generated during storms persistently wore away the embankment at the historic West Jonesport Cemetery since a storm destroyed the tamarack-log rip-rap installed in 1976.

Over the past several years, a 350-foot section of shore frontage at the historic cemetery has been steadily eaten away. The erosion threatened the graves, some of which date back to the first half of the 19th century. The erosion also undermined the embankment along a public parking lot on West Main Street, which posed a threat to the safety of travelers along the scenic Route 187 loop. West Jonesport Cemetery is one of four cemeteries maintained by the town. Many residents have relatives buried there. According to David Garcelon, district conservationist with the Natural Resource Conservation Service, "Site inspection found critically eroding slope due to tidal and wave action at the base of the bank...slope is mostly bare soil at the 1:1 or steeper grade, 10 to 12 feet high, and extends approximately 250 to 300 feet along the cemetery and adjacent parking lot."

The solution seemed relatively simple: stabilize the embankment and install rip-rap that would withstand the punishing wind and waves. However, there were complicating factors, such as how to gain access to the hillside to install the rip-rap and restore the beach and, of course, how to pay for the work. The first problem was solved when the owner of the adjacent property to the west allowed workers to use his land, and even tore down a building to facilitate access to the cemetery site. The town agreed to stabilize the area used for equipment access.

Selectwoman Gloria Feeney began searching for funding sources in 1997. She communicated with at least 10 non-profit and government agencies, including the Maine Emergency Management Agency (MEMA). MEMA applied to the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Hazard Mitigation Grant Program on behalf of the West Jonesport Cemetery, and was awarded funding for the erosion control project.

Construction began in July 2000 and was finished the following month. The rehabilitation included lining the bank with filter fabric, adding some 2,500 cubic yards of gravel, and installing 5,000 cubic yards of granite rip-rap to stop the erosion and protect the beach. Following a recommendation from the Washington County Soil and Water District, about 100 rugosa roses, about \$800 worth, were planted in two parallel rows among the slabs of rip-rap. As they grow, the roses' root systems will help stabilize the embankment. FEMA contributed \$39,203 to the project, which totaled \$52,271. The town's share was \$13,067. According to Feeney, nature regularly tests the effectiveness of the erosion control project. "We get several storms each year, mainly in the winter, but the project has stood the test," she said.



Washington County,  
Maine



### Quick Facts

Year:

**1998**

Sector:

**Public**

Cost:

**\$52,271.00 (Actual)**

Primary Activity/Project:

**Vegetation Management**

Primary Funding:

**Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)**